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Editorial

Batter the Arroyo regime with more tactical offensives

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) salutes the heroic Red commanders and fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) for the victorious tactical offensives launched in various parts of the country these past three weeks.

The revolutionary forces and masses nationwide acclaim the NPA's brilliant tactical offensives in Samar and Compostela Valley that have resulted in the confiscation of relatively large numbers of weapons and the annihilation of fascist enemy troops.

The offensives are in accordance with the general revolutionary line and call of the 11th Plenum of the

CPP Central Committee to intensify the revolutionary armed struggle based on the expansion and strengthening of the revolutionary mass base and attendant to the advance of the peasant masses' antifeudal struggle in the countryside.

They are a concrete response to the people's seething needs and aspirations in the face of their extreme oppression and hardship at the hands of the reactionary regime. The conduct of these tactical offensives is part of the escalation of various types of people's resistance to the puppet, militarist and corrupt Arroyo regime.

It is likewise necessary to intensify tactical offensives to arm the people's army and further expand it, strengthen it and enhance its capability to meet the ever-growing task of advancing people's war.

These offensives show that the Arroyo regime's much-vaunted militarism and its all-out war against the NPA are a failure. The NPA continues to grow stronger nationwide consequent to the victories of the Second Great Rectification Movement and as proof of the correctness of the line of extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare based on an ever-widening and ever-deepening mass base at the present stage of launching protracted people's war in the Philippines. It enjoys ever-widening mass support and reaps continuous and more numerous victories.

The people's war is advancing more rapidly as a consequence of the puppet mercenary army's extreme isolation from the masses and the reactionary government's severe anxiety, saddled as it is with mounting



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and utterly irresolvable problems. This has now been exacerbated by the country's more onerous foreign debt obligations and growing military expenditures.

The regime is beside itself thinking of ways to quench the fires of revolutionary armed struggle in various parts of the country with the overextended forces of the AFP. Though huge, the AFP can only concentrate its forces in some guerrilla fronts. Even in the areas it can cover, the AFP cannot maintain its presence everywhere.

Even then, the bulk of Philippine Army, Marine and Special Forces battalions are already deployed in NPA guerrilla fronts. In reality, even in Mindanao, there are more AFP forces in the guerrilla fronts of the NPA than in the areas of the MILF, MNLF, Abu Sayyaf and other Moro forces.

This June, the regime was forced to withdraw some troops deployed against the MILF and redeploy them to the guerrilla fronts in Samar. Two battalions and one Reconnaissance Company were added to Samar after the conduct

of two victorious NPA offensives in the island. One of them, the 14th IB, had been transferred to Sulu in 2001 in response to the growing resistance of the Moro people in the area. Arroyo has also ordered the police and the local government to fill the void in areas that the AFP cannot cover.

The additional deployment of AFP troops to a number of guerrilla fronts will surely result in more widespread and graver abuses against the people. Nevertheless, it will provide more targets for NPA tactical offensives.

With no hope for the reactionary military forces to defeat the revolution, the Arroyo regime has no one else to turn to but US imperialism. In colluding with US President George W. Bush, Arroyo has been firmly pushing for US military intervention, using the latter as her foremost boogeyman. She also wants to use it as the main instrument in confronting the country's growing revolutionary forces.

On orders of US imperialism to run roughshod over the peace talks, the regime is stupidly threat-

ening to nullify the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG). Actually, the regime has long junked the JASIG. It has directly violated the agreement by colluding with US imperialism in declaring the CPP and the NPA as "terrorist." The filing of fabricated criminal cases against Jose Maria Sison and his continuous harassment are likewise violations of the JASIG.


These measures of the Arroyo regime have rendered ineffective the efforts of House Speaker Jose de Venecia this June 28 to revive the peace talks. To resume the talks, Arroyo must withdraw her campaign in the US and Europe to have the CPP, the NPA and Jose Maria Sison categorized as "terrorist."

To support its "terrorist" declaration, which the CPP and the NPA have strongly objected to and refuted, the Arroyo regime is now weaving a web of lies, which include accusations of NPA involvement in illegal drugs and in maintaining marijuana plantations in guerrilla zones. All of this, however, can be easily belied. The truth of the AFP, PNP and government leaders' leading roles behind the country's illegal drug trade is likewise being exposed.

Arroyo is likewise obstructing the GRP-MILF talks the same way she is impeding peace talks between the GRP and the NDFP. The GRP has declared the MILF as "terrorist" and has issued arrest orders against its leaders to put up huge stumbling blocks to the continuation of the peace talks.

The NPA is in a position to intensify the revolutionary armed struggle. The NPA is constantly aware that when the AFP concentrates its forces in particular areas,

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More widespread, more frequent

Tactical offensives of the New People's Army (NPA) are gaining momentum and becoming more extensive. From June 16 to the first week of July, Red fighters carried out successive ambushes, attacks and other military actions against small and isolated troops and detachments of the Philippine Army, Philippine National Police and the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU).

Most striking were the assault on the 52nd IB camp in Eastern Samar on June 28 and the NPA victory over 60th IB troops in an encounter on June 30 in Compostela Valley, southern Mindanao. On the whole, 33 enemy forces were reported killed while 23 were wounded. The NPA seized 39 firearms and ammunition of various caliber as well as other military equipment.

Compostela Valley. The NPA confiscated an M203, eight M16s, three M14s and a telescope from a platoon of the 60th IB in an encounter at around 1:30 p.m. in Barrio Pansabangan, New Bataan.

Ten soldiers, including their commander 2nd Lt. Peter James Angeles, and three CAFGU elements were killed while five were wounded in the firefight.

According to a report from the Merardo Arce Command, the troops encountered a 36-strong NPA unit. During the exchange of fire, an NPA squad maneuvered to seize the higher ground, thus causing the Red fighters to quickly prevail.

Agusan del Norte. The NPA ambushed and killed a CAFGU element and three members of the Civilian Volunteer Organization (CVO) in Lawan-lawan, Las Nieves on June 27.

Eastern Samar. Red fighters skillfully used the

element of surprise and the camouflage provided by darkness and strong rain to successfully overpower the patrol base of the 52nd IB's "A" Company in Barangay Cagpili, Oras on June 26. The raid began at 4:30 in the morning and the firefight lasted two hours. Because of the area's remoteness and the difficulty of access, the enemy was unable to send reinforcements immediately.

The NPA seized seven M16s, five M14s, a grenade launcher, nine garands and two carbines. Five soldiers and ten CAFGU members were killed. A soldier's wife was caught in the crossfire. Two others were also wounded. Before retreating, the guerrillas burned down the detachment.

The raid was the second in Eastern Samar within a week. On June 22, the NPA assaulted a police station in the town center of Quinapondan. At the same time, the Red fighters searched through the houses of the police and confiscated an M16, a .45 and a .38 caliber pistol. Insp. Cayetano Gannaban, the municipal police chief, was wounded in the raid.

Abra. A soldier of the 17th IB Special Operations Team was killed and another wounded in an ambush conducted by the NPA Agustin Begnalen Command in Sitio Tapayen, Barangay Alaoa, Tineg on July 2. Together with three guides, the troops were on their way to their command post when the ambush occurred.

Zambales. A soldier from the 24th IB was killed and three others wounded in two separate clashes in San Marcelino, Zambales. A soldier was killed when the NPA assaulted the 24th IB detachment in Barangay Adlao on the night of June 16. Three

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it leaves many other areas wide open. Even when enemy forces are concentrated, it is important for the NPA to pinpoint and deliver blows on the enemy's relatively weak points.

The Arroyo regime cannot prevent the escalation of the armed struggle especially now that the regime is mired ever deeper in the

crisis of the ruling system. It is bankrupt, steeped in decadence and corruption and is beset with fractiousness. The Arroyo regime is extremely hated by, and isolated from, the people.

On the other hand, the revolutionary movement continues to expand, deepen and strengthen itself nationwide. It is advancing the armed struggle together with

the agrarian revolution and mass base building. The various arenas and sections of the revolutionary movement are consciously linked and cooperate with one another, as with the movement in the countryside and in the cities. It is boldly expanding the national united front as the revolution enjoys the deep and broad support of the Filipino people.

AB

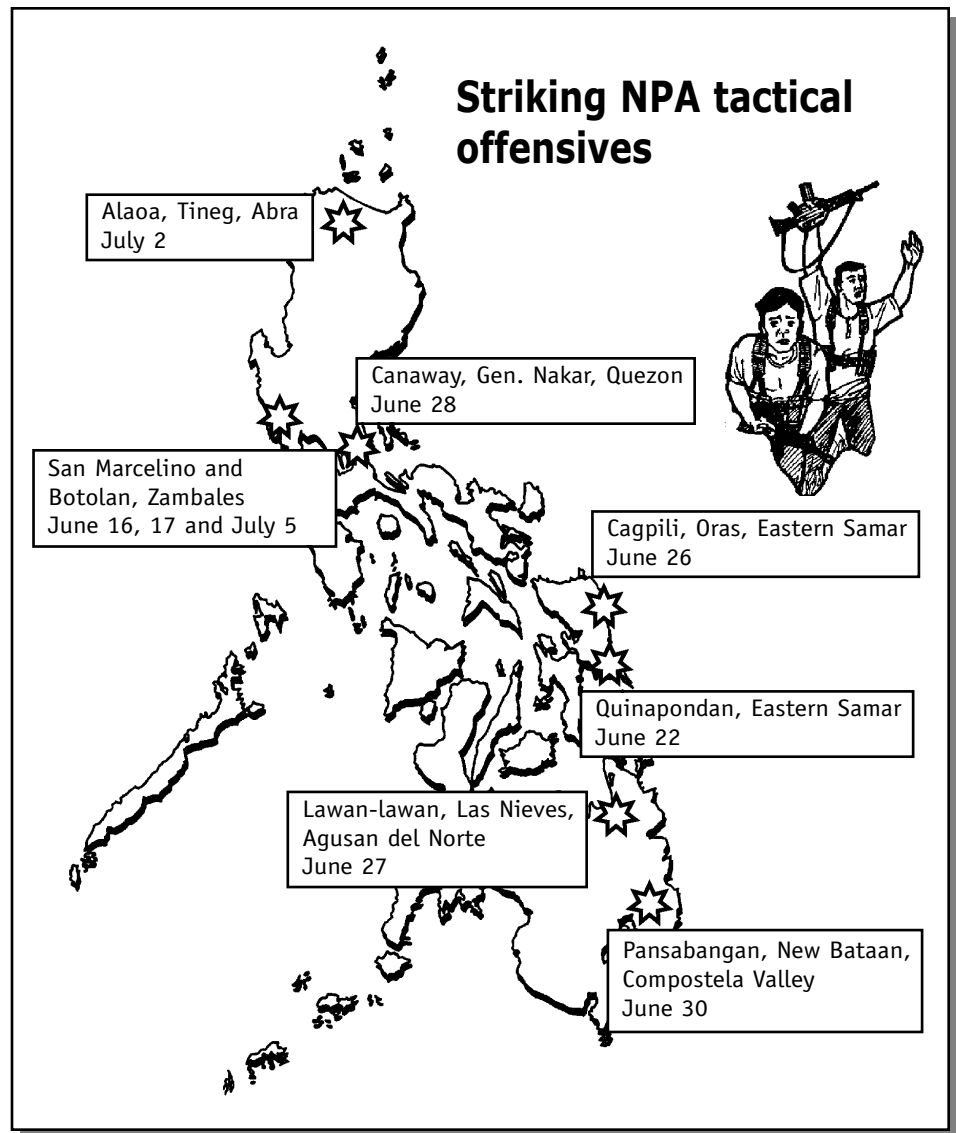


VICTORIOUS NPA OFFENSIVES

soldiers were wounded in an ambush by Red fighters in Sitio Itanglaw the following day. The soldiers were part of the group sent to reinforce the detachment. The NPA detonated a land mine, hitting the V-150 armored personnel carrier the soldiers were riding. Reggie "Ka Cesar" Espinosa, a worker from San Simon, Pampanga who joined the NPA in 2001, was martyred in the fight. Contrary to the AFP's statement that nine NPA fighters were killed, the other Red fighters were able to retreat safely.

On July 5, five troops of the Regional Special Action Force and the 315th Provincial Mobile Group of the Zambales PNP were sent to hospital with gunshot wounds after encountering an NPA unit in Barangay Maguisguis, Botolan.

Quezon. Six troops of the 59th IB were wounded after attempting to encircle an NPA encampment in Sitio Kinasakitan, Barangay Canaway, General Nakar on June 28. They were hit when the NPA detonated a claymore mine. Two Red fighters heroically laid down their lives in the firefight that lasted for over an hour. AB



The NPA suffered no casualties in the encounters in Pampanga and Zambales – Ka Roger

A monstrous lie. This was Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal's reaction to AFP reports that 15 Red fighters had been killed in an encounter on July 4 in the town of Sasmoan, Pampanga and 20 in the firefight in Botolan, Zambales on July 5.

According to the Josepino Corpuz Command (JCC) of the NPA in Central Luzon, not a

single guerrilla was killed. In truth, according to the JCC, at least four enemy soldiers were killed in Sasmoan and seven killed in Botolan.

"On orders of Malacañang and the AFP high command, the military has concocted a monstrous lie in its desperation to boost the sagging morale of its men," according to Ka Roger.

"Since suffering grave losses in Samar and Compostela Valley and without a single victory to prate about, the AFP's high command and propaganda mill have resorted to manufacturing all sorts of lies to cover up their losses," Rosal added, "Weaving lies has long been the practice of the AFP. Fascists are in fact liars through and through." AB



The successful establishment of a revolutionary union

“Workers, unite! We have nothing to lose but our chains!” Marx’s declaration rings true for the workers of a modern factory in Central Luzon. In a span of three years, workers in this factory took a stand and struggled until they were able to establish a revolutionary union. They are now reaping the initial fruits of their efforts.

It was in the year 2000 when organizing began in the factory which would later become the arena of struggle and the source of valuable lessons in setting up and consolidating a revolutionary union in Central Luzon. In this factory, the revolutionary movement came upon the workers’ slave-like conditions. The equipment was modern and labor was centralized, but it was under the old *kabo* system. Labor-only contracting was the system of employment. By appearances, it was not the capitalists who employed the workers but “contractors” who did not have the means to pay wages or provide benefits. The workers were contractuels without hope of ever becoming regulars.

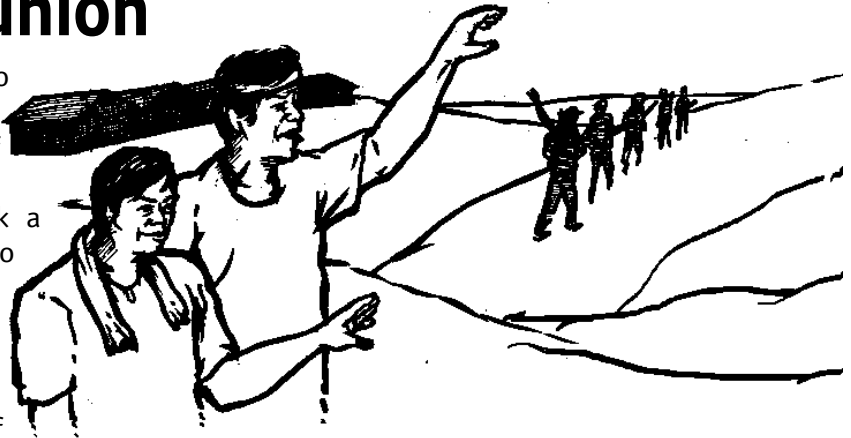
There was no set daily wage. The workers were only paid according to the number and quality of the finished products. They had no benefits whatsoever. Most of the workers lived in shanties in a place without any electricity, water and alternative sources of food. Others merely rented cramped spaces in the shanties of their fellow poor.

Within a year, organizing groups and the organizing committee were formed and became the basis for setting up the Party branch inside the factory. Simultaneously, comrades provided guidance to the group being formed to set up the factory union.

The spirit of genuine unionism spread rapidly. The fact that all the workers were contractual was not an obstacle for them in organizing their union.

Victorious strike

Even before the union had been formally set up, the workers began demanding from the capitalist the benefits that had long been denied them. In response, the capitalist fired the workers who were most active in organizing the union. The workers went on strike. In the first few weeks, they paralyzed the factory’s entire



production. But the capitalist maneuvered to hire scabs who were brought inside the factory with the help of the police and attempted to break the picket line. There were days when the capitalist succeeded in continuing the factory’s operations, and there were also days when the workers prevailed. This daily battle for control lasted for months.

The workers persisted in their long struggle in their picket line despite the lack of resources and continual harassment. This was due to their high fighting spirit and the strong support they received from their families and community; the unflagging help from other unions and progressive sectors; excellent alliance work with other democratic sectors and individuals; and the revolutionary armed movement’s correct and timely intervention on the issue.

Before and during the strike, the workers continuously launched study sessions that included, among others, courses on genuine unionism, courses under the Pambansa-Demokratikong Paaralan (PADEPA) and Marxist-Leninist studies. After the strike, Party membership doubled and three branches were set up on the basis of the flow of production and workers’ concentration. The Party branch executive committee was likewise set up. The number of mass activists developed within the union also ran into the hundreds.

The key to the strike’s victory was the support provided by mass organizations in the workers’ community. Together with organizing inside the factory, the workers also organized their own community and prepared them for the union’s struggle. The mass organizations were thus tempered, serving as a wellspring of support and a launching pad for campaigns on other issues confronting the workers. They launched medical,



civic and other projects to address the needs of everyone in the community. A Party branch was also set up here.

To avoid being backed into a corner and crushed by the capitalist, the workers sought and succeeded in broadening support for their strike and association. Aside from the support of other unions and mass organizations in the community, they also won over church people, local government officials and even some police forces. It was these supporters who gave sustenance to the workers and their families for the entire duration of the strike. The investigations conducted and other legal measures taken in the cases that the workers filed against the capitalists were also a big help.

The NPA unit operating in the guerrilla zone where the factory is located was also of great assistance. The NPA explained to the capitalist the revolution's policies in dealing with capitalists and factories within guerrilla zones. The NPA warned the capitalist against taking steps that would be highly detrimental to the workers' interest and explained what the punitive measures were for such acts. The NPA was able to neutralize the capitalist, who immediately refrained from using violence.

Because of the justness of the workers' demands and their determination to fight, the capitalist was compelled to acquiesce to their demands. The capitalist reinstated the workers who had been fired from their jobs and promised to provide benefits such as SSS and medical pay. The workers also won their legal cases.

At present, the workers are endeavoring to have their union

formally recognized by the capitalist as their representative in collective bargaining.

Enlistment into the people's army

Because of the intense exploitation and oppression suffered by the workers in this factory, it has not been hard for them to grasp the correctness and importance of the people's democratic revolution and armed struggle. From their studies of society and from their own experience, they find it easy to relate their poverty with those of other sectors especially since many of them came from the peasantry. Their union is now active in regional and national mass struggles. They actively participate in political mobilizations and mass campaigns outside the factory.

But the union's most striking victory is its ability to continuously supply the NPA with a relatively large number of recruits. Within three years, the union has sent over 20 workers to various guerrilla fronts in the region. This is a big leap considering the entire labor movement's weaknesses in previous years.

The Party branch inside the factory carefully plans the recruitment of workers to join the NPA. It tempers the union membership through continuous studies and participation in local struggles and the gen-

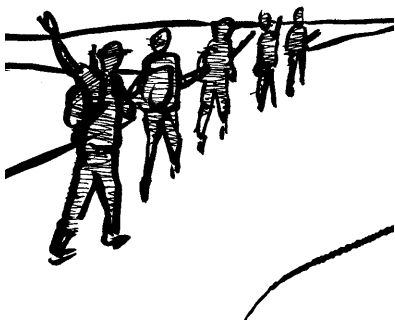
eral mass movement. With each program, it sets the target number of worker-recruits for the NPA and conducts a campaign among the members for them to volunteer. It also has a campaign calling on workers to hold integration programs with NPA units for a number of months.

The union cooperates to prepare members who signify their desire to join the NPA. Courses that will be of help to them in conducting revolutionary work in the countryside, such as the revolutionary guide to land reform and peasant study courses, among others, are given emphasis in their political education programs.

The union also helps the workers gather up necessary items (such as packs). The Party branch in the union, together with the branch in the community, ensures the welfare of the families left behind. The workers do their best to contribute support for the basic needs of such families. This way, even breadwinners do not face obstacles in joining the NPA.

This factory is but one of many factories nationwide where revolutionary unions operate or are being set up. They are revolutionary because a large part of the union membership possesses class and revolutionary consciousness, even if some others lag behind.

In this factory, the Party structure is solid and the number of activists large. The Party is able to exercise its leadership in the union's day-to-day activities and in the economic and political struggles of the mass membership even as it actively contributes to the legal mass movement in the cities and the armed struggle in the countryside. AB





Victories and valuable lessons from the Central Azucarera de Tarlac strike

The fires of a general strike by workers and farm workers of Hacienda Luisita and the Central Azucarera de Tarlac (CAT) blazed in February 2003, rapidly spreading in their communities until victory was achieved.

Hacienda Luisita and CAT are owned by the family of former Pres. Corazon Aquino and former Rep. Jose Cojuangco Jr., who is now one of Arroyo's advisers. CAT is the country's second largest sugar refinery and supplies almost all of Luzon. It is also where 70% of the country's imported sugar is refined.

It had been more than a year since the workers laid down their demands before the CAT management against contractualization and the denial of medical benefits that they had previously enjoyed, as provided for in their collective bargaining agreement (CBA). Because of the maneuverings of management and the union leadership's inclination towards yellow unionism, a long time passed without any resolution in sight for these demands.

By December 2002, the situation had reached boiling point and the workers could not wait any longer. They decided to pursue their fight just before the end of *kabyawan*, the sugar cane milling season. The paralyzation of milling operations at this point would threaten to destroy relations between Cojuangco and the other landlords in the area who supplied sugar cane to CAT. The workers won over to their side vacillating union officials who were otherwise upright and isolated the yellow ones in order to advance their struggle with full determination.

The full mobilization of workers throughout the enterprise began in January 2003. From January to early February, the workers launched a series of collective actions to assert their demands.

At the same time, the workers repudiated the corruption and economism of yellow union leaders and paved the way for their expulsion.

Management asserted that the workers' actions were illegal and attempted to pin down the union through long-drawn and endless negotiations involving the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

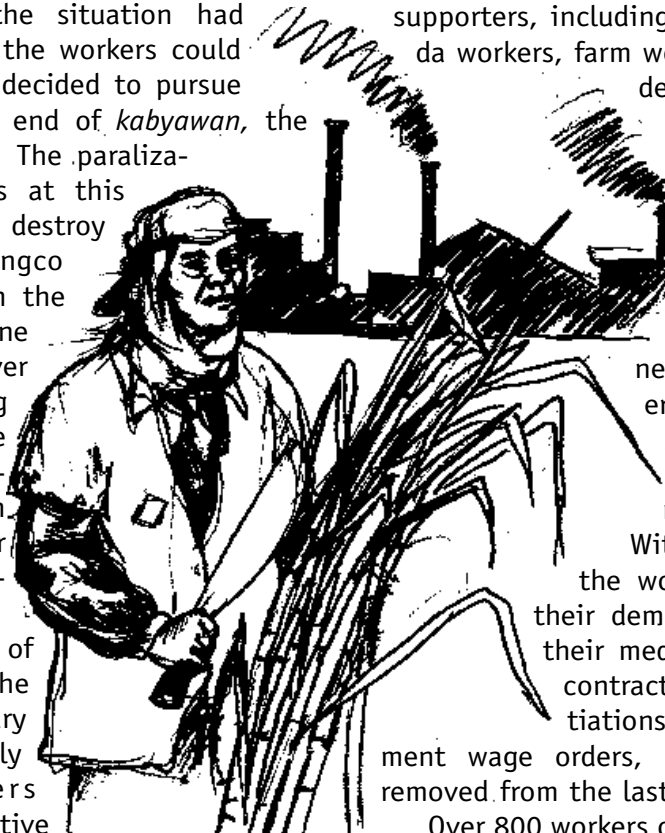
The workers were not deceived and instead declared a strike. The DOLE immediately issued an Assumption of Jurisdiction (AJ)¹ order to stop the strike. Despite management's outright bribery and coercion, the workers militantly set up their picket line on Friday evening, February 21 to prevent the strike from being nipped in the bud by an AJ order.²

Subsequently, the operations of the *azucarera* (sugar mill) ground to a halt and 1,000 workers and their supporters encircled the enterprise. Nearby communities of farm workers heeded the call for a work stoppage and joined the strike. Even before the strike, the workers staged a rally joined by more than 500 supporters, including tricycle drivers, other hacienda workers, farm workers, students and other residents.

About a thousand more joined the picket line each day. By the fourth day, the number of workers and farm workers who militantly stood their ground at the picket line had swelled to 4,000. Management could do nothing but negotiate directly with the workers outside the processes defined by DOLE. A thousand workers and farm workers came to the negotiations.

Within three days of negotiations, the workers were able to win all of their demands. They were able to have their medical benefits restored and the contractualization policy junked. Negotiations were also opened to implement wage orders, which management had slyly removed from the last CBA.

Over 800 workers of CAT benefited from the strike. In addition, management also granted farm workers'





demands for a guaranteed minimum of 80 days of work for every milling season, and for free hospitalization, medicine and other basic needs. Electric power, which CAT had cut when the workers decided to go on strike, was restored in the communities. Management also agreed to help prevent any attempt at militarizing the communities where workers and farm workers resided. Even the issue of the impending land-use conversion of the hacienda was opened. The strike ended in victory

within a week.

Victories and lessons

The workers' militant stand was the key to the strike's victory, at a time when their opportunist leaders' inclination towards yellow unionism had weakened their union. The workers prevailed because they were in possession of the correct analysis, were determined to fight, and used excellent tactics that enjoyed the support of the general membership as well as of other residents.

The corruption and the collusion with management of certain union leaders were thoroughly exposed. Such leaders were isolated in the course of the struggle and during the strike. By tirelessly explaining the issues to the members, the organizers were able to combat the deep-seated economism and other influences of yellow unionism that had long obstructed their advance. Thus, the members further imbibed the spirit of genuine unionism and further raised their class consciousness.

The large number and militancy of the forces that the workers were able to mobilize were a great help to their struggle. The workers of CAT were able to prove that it was possible to wage negotiations with management independently, without being confined by the bureaucratic and anti-worker policies and processes of DOLE. They were able to skillfully make use of, and benefit from, the strength and influ-

ence of their union in local politics, their strike's excellent timing and the particular economic and political circumstances that the hacienda and the Cojuangco family were in. In this manner, the negotiations became more fast-paced and more flexible.

The work stoppage, which began as a strike at CAT, culminated in a general strike involving the entire hacienda. It grew in scope due to the participation of the hacienda's farm workers and their communities, who also put forward their demands and joined the negotiations.

The joint action further broadened and strengthened the workers' links and alliances with other sectors and forces both inside and outside the hacienda. Members of other militant unions in the hacienda, mass organizations and middle forces directly participated in the mobilizations. The barangay captains in barrios within and adjacent to the hacienda helped defend the strikers by blocking the approach of military forces. Support poured in from students, the middle forces and even from local politician-allies.

The strike at CAT and Hacienda Luisita has been hailed not only as a strike of one union against an avaricious bourgeois-comprador, but as a struggle of the working class, together with the peasantry, against the big landlord-comprador bourgeoisie and the policies of the reactionary government. AB



¹ The AJ or Assumption of Jurisdiction order is often used to declare a strike illegal and force the union to negotiate even if the strike has a legitimate basis and has gone through legal processes. Through the AJ, the DOLE secretary arrogates the right to resolve the issues behind the strike. He issues a return-to-work order and uses the police to enforce it.

² Because the following days were Saturday and Sunday, no official AJ order could be issued to the workers.



Twists and turns in the struggle of Lepanto Mining workers

It took five months of struggle for the workers of Lepanto Consolidated Mining Corporation (LCMC) to achieve their demands against management. From November 2002 to March 2003, the workers, along with their families, communities and supporters, underwent an arduous process of forging their strength. The struggle was led by the newly elected militant union leadership that replaced the previous yellow leadership.

LCMC is the country's largest producer of gold and copper, with a 2,586-strong work force. It earns \$47 million (over P2.54 billion) annually from exports and its operations are based in Mankayan, Benguet.

Foremost among the issues the workers fought against were the company's policy of contractualization and forced work during official holidays. Among other unjust policies of management, the company also obligated its workers to report to work much sooner than their regular schedule, deprived them of their Christmas bonus, refused to observe due process, arbitrarily terminated employees suspected of "high-grading¹," and violated certain provisions of their collective bargaining agreement.

The workers struck on February 1, 2003 after a series of failed negotiations with management and several weeks of gathering strength, firming up their unity and preparing for struggle through collective action.

The LCMC had the strike

declared illegal through an Assumption of Jurisdiction (AJ) injunction from DOLE, and a return-to-work order was issued. Those who refused to resume working were immediately terminated. The workers did not budge, defied the DOLE order and firmly continued their strike.

Within a month of the strike, the LCMC management attempted several times to break the picket line with the use of the local police. The company also tried to bring in scabs but this was thwarted by the strikers. Many workers were injured and harassed, and several of them were likewise arrested and jailed.

Simultaneously, the management ensnared and pressured the union leadership into signing an unjust agreement where LCMC offered no concessions, save for allowing the workers to return to work and promising to discuss the workers' demands on condition that the entire union leadership be terminated. Because the union leadership was ill-prepared and the union president thought it was all right to "sacrifice" the union leadership for the workers' welfare, the president acquiesced to a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) prepared by LCMC which amounted to surrendering the strike.

But when the MOA was presented before the general assembly for ratification, the union members firmly and unanimously nullified the agreement. Instead, they further closed ranks and launched

a second round of struggle. As a result, the union president found courage and humbly criticized himself, and firmly and continuously supported the solid and determined struggle of the masses of workers.

Meanwhile, support continued to pour in from communities, churches, peasant organizations, local chapters of Bayan Muna and other groups. They sent food, visited every household in the surrounding communities to explain the issues behind the struggle and gather support and participated in the workers' rallies and pickets and other actions outside the mines. Although the mayor of Mankayan serves as the LCMC's attorney and minion, the workers won greater support from the local governments in Benguet, including Mankayan's entire Association of Barangay Councils, the local governments of nearby municipalities as well as Gov. Raul Molintas.

With Governor Molintas' help, management was finally compelled to conduct the proper transactions with the workers' representatives, rescind the previous MOA and come to terms with the workers.

Victories

This was the first strike against LCMC in 55 years. The previous strike was held way back in 1949 when the workers demanded a wage increase and the recognition of

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¹Pilfering high-grade ore containing gold.

Illegal detention of activists in Baguio denounced

THE NPA Chadli Molintas Command (CMC) denounced the illegal arrest and filing of trumped-up charges against two members of progressive organizations in Ilocos Sur. Elements of the MIG arrested Evelyn Bedaña and Josephine Perez in Baguio City on June 22, brought them to a safehouse and tortured them into admitting that they were members of the NPA and high-ranking officials of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Bedaña works for the Solidarity of Peasants Against Exploitation (STOP-Ex), which helps tobacco farmers in Ilocos. Perez is the regional coordinator of the College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP)-Ilocos.

The CMC assailed the military for accusing the two women of involvement in the killing of the mayor of Tineg, Abra; the demolition of the Marcos bust in Tuba, Benguet (2002); the ambush of the mayor of Sta. Lucia, Ilocos Sur (2001); the killing of the traitor Conrado Balweg (1999) among many other charges.

Meanwhile, Marie Flor Ramos, who was accused of being an NPA member and involvement in the ambush of military troops on January 4 in Palian, Tupi, South Cotabato, was released on July 1.

The court ordered the case against Ramos dismissed for lack of sufficient evidence. She was arrested by unidentified persons in Quezon City on March 24 and was deprived for several weeks of her right to communicate with anyone, including her attorney and family.

NPA not involved in illegal drugs – CPP

IN a statement on July 6, the CPP, through Gregorio “Ka Roger” Rosal refuted accusations by Gloria Arroyo that the NPA was involved in illegal drug operations and maintains marijuana plantations in guerrilla zones.

Arroyo’s accusation came in the face of the NPA’s victorious tactical offensives and amid the regime’s anti-drug campaign that was all for show. According to Ka Roger, it is the AFP, PNP and high government officials who are really behind the illegal drug trade in the country. He said that they protected all of the country’s more than 215 big drug syndicates.

According to Ka Roger, only small-time pushers, users and innocent victims are being arrested in the regime’s nominal campaign.

On the other hand, he said, since the NPA’s establishment, its campaign against illegal drugs has been persistent and effective, especially in the areas where it operates. According to Ka Roger, this is the result of the efforts of the CPP-NPA and the entire revolutionary movement to actively launch mass political and education campaigns against the use of illegal drugs.

In a statement by NDF-Mindanao spokesperson Jorge “Ka Oris” Madlos, he said that the NPA loathes illegal drugs and has never had anything to do with them. According to Ka Oris, the NPA has discovered marijuana plantations in a number of military detachments raided by the Red army in previous years.

NPA arrests Zambales governor

A 12-MEMBER NPA squad arrested Zambales Gov. Vicente Magsaysay as he holed up in his vacation house on May 25. Taken by surprise, the governor, his six bodyguards and the policemen who were with him were unable to resist.

According to Josepino Corpuz Command (JCC) spokesperson Ka Jose Agtalon, the NPA took Governor Magsaysay into custody to talk to him about various complaints by peasants and workers from Iba, Zambales. Among others, the peasants complained of being evicted from Barangay Barbara, Iba and the workers raised the non-payment of their wages, bonuses and benefits.

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their union. This was also the first time in a long while that the workers’ genuine, militant and patriotic unionism prevailed. In the course of the strike, the workers and their families steeled their determination, winning the support of theirs as well as other nearby communities in the struggle against the country’s biggest mining company.

After the strike, all of the terminated workers were reinstated. The workers and LCMC agreed that the company would not take any retaliatory action against the workers. In addition, the workers achieved their demand to have all casual workers regularized when

their contracts end. Agreements were likewise achieved on the other issues confronting the union.

The workers realized the importance and power of collective action to pursue their welfare. Within a week, they proved that collective action was the principal means of union struggle. They fearlessly defied the various schemes concocted by management as well as the DOLE’s determination to thwart their struggle. Thus did they experience democracy within their ranks, effectively confront the capitalists and the state’s maneuvers and acts of violence and achieve their overall demands. AB

Magsaysay also forced them to work for 24 hours without overtime pay.

The JCC explained that Governor Magsaysay was a legitimate military target because of his crimes against the people and his maintenance of a private army and a large armory.

Nevertheless, the NPA released him to give him a chance to reform.

The NPA seized an M60 machine gun, two M14s, an M203, four pistols and ammunition of various caliber. Also seized were a radio transceiver, a base radio, seven cellphones and a camera.

Workers poised to strike at Cosmos

WORKERS at Cosmos Bottling Philippines are set to strike against efforts of company owner Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco to short-change them. Negotiations for their CBA are currently deadlocked. Among others, the workers object to Cojuangco's scheme to revoke the seniority pay that they had long been receiving and the P10,000 signing bonus received by every worker. Cojuangco also sought to peg the wage increase to only P40 per day for the next three years even as the previous CBA had provided for an increase of P50 over two years.

Workers are also objecting to the company's contractualization policy. Ever since Cojuangco acquired Cosmos in 2001, the company has stopped hiring new regular employees and regulars have slowly been replaced with casuals.

To prevent a strike, Cojuangco has both threatened and cajoled the workers. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) issued an Assumption of Jurisdiction (AJ) order in the first week of June, declaring the strike illegal even before it has been launched.

US PACOM looking into positioning troops in Albay

TWENTY-FOUR American military forces under the US Pacific Command (US PACOM) visited Legazpi City from June 20-28, with one of the teams headed by Col. Cipton Tarenaka. They used the US PACOM's Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation Program as their cover. The group's alleged mission is to carry out an in-depth assessment of the area's preparedness against volcanic eruptions, storms, floods, tsunami and other calamities.

In truth, the US PACOM visit's purpose was to investigate the area in relation to plans to position American troops for military training exercises and other activities under the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). The US has avoided media disclosure of the visit to avoid controversy.

Bishop Antonio Fortich, 89

BISHOP Emeritus Antonio Fortich passed away in Bacolod City on July 2 at the age of 89.

Bishop Fortich was known as the "bishop of the poor." He was well known as an advocate of peasants and farm workers' interests. He supported the struggle for genuine land reform. He also united with the people in opposing martial rule, particularly the intense militarization of Negros.

Because of his stand for the oppressed, Bishop Fortich became close to the revolutionary movement. He was once an adviser of the National Democratic Front (NDF).

Among those who paid tribute to him were Comrades Luis Jalandoni, Consuelo Ledesma, Frank Fernandez and Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal.

Demolition in Baclaran condemned

THE Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-NCR led a rally in front of the MMDA office on July 7 to condemn the violent demolition of vendor stalls in Baclaran, Roxas Blvd. and Coastal Road. One vendor was killed when MMDA personnel opened fire during the demolition on July 6. The MMDA truncheoned the vendors, destroyed their stalls and poured gasoline on their wares.

South Korea and Germany rocked by strikes

STRIKES by workers and employees are now rocking South Korea and Germany.

South Korea. Over 100,000 workers launched separate work stoppages. Twenty-two thousand workers belonging to the Korean Railway Workers' Union opposed their company's restructuring plan. Eight thousand workers of Chohung Bank opposed the planned privatization of the bank. Meanwhile, 80,000 workers in Hyundai Motors' 100 plants demanded the reduction of their work hours from 40 to 36 hours a week.

Germany. Workers at BMW and Volkswagen led by IG Metall Industrial, the largest auto industry union, have been on strike for almost a month. They demanded that the company reduce their work hours from 38 to 35 hours a week.